

PREFACE

In the present study, an attempt has been made to highlight the educational philosophy of Śaṅkaradeva, the saint and socio-educational reformer of the 15th/16th century Assam. Śaṅkaradeva a man of multifaceted personality had contributed immensely in the spheres of religion, education language, literature, dance, drama, music, art and culture in this part of the country. Sankaradeva was unparalleled from every angle of life. Śaṅkaradeva started progressive and democratic movement in order to redeem the Assamese social life from the grip of socio-religious disharmony. Śaṅkaradeva's mission was to reawaken the spiritual consciousness among people. He wanted to teach the common people religion in its proper sense. He wanted to establish social equality among all sections of people, irrespective of caste, creed and colour. Śaṅkaradeva wished and tried to liberate the common masses from ignorance and suffering. Śaṅkaradeva uplift optimistic views towards life, propagated activitistic ethics and denounced asceticism.

Sankaradeva up held the philosophy of 'One' and believed in the existence of 'One Absolute'. Śaṅkaradeva preached the supremacy of one God – which is Kṛṣṇa, as an ideal concept of *Eka-Śaraṇa-Hari-Nāma-Dharma*. Śaṅkaradeva rebelled against the socio-cultural norms which was prevalent during that time. At that time Assam had seen a spiritual degeneration of Hinduism. The Socio-religious atmosphere of this region suffered a stagnation which required a jolt from within and an impetus for spiritual regeneration. Śaṅkaradeva made the initial attempt for regeneration under these circumstances. Śaṅkaradeva's reformist effort was directed towards the spiritual and socio-educational regeneration. Śaṅkaradeva fought against ritual excessiveness and institutional inequalities.

In fact as an integral socio-ethical thinker, Śaṅkaradeva felt the necessity of education for the oppressed people of this region of India. Śaṅkaradeva's educational views were mainly based on the traditional culture of India. It has certain adaptations of that time. For this reason Śaṅkaradeva's philosophy of education became idealistic and pragmatic. Śaṅkaradeva observed that education is the main factor of unveiling the truth and it makes people aware of their ethico-social responsibilities. Every individual is to train his body, mind and senses for the obedience of the spiritual command. Śaṅkaradeva was aware of the varieties of life and nature. For the realization of true nature Śaṅkaradeva observed that education play the key role to correct thinking and awaken the mind of the common people. Self-realization is the objective of education. According to the educational philosophy of Śaṅkaradeva teacher guides the student, moulds his personality and provide him true knowledge.

Besides a few pages on its preface, acknowledgement and transliteration scheme the thesis has been divided into seven main comprehensive and distinct chapters. The preface includes a rough sketch on the plan of chapter divisions. The objectives, sources and limitations of study with dependable supports and acceptable reasons. Acknowledgement is a short note to say on the helping hands of different resourceful and respected persons, institutions and the libraries. Transliteration scheme is an alphabetical introduction to writing and pronunciation.

The report of the present research has been divided into seven chapters. The introductory chapter presents the research theme, significance of the study, statement of the problem, objectives of the study. The second chapter is specified for the review

of the related literatures in the areas of multifaceted activities of Śaṅkaradeva. The Third chapter includes the discussion about the theoretical and conceptual framework of education. In the fourth chapter the social and educational condition of 15th/16th century Assam was discussed. Chapter five deals with the analysis and interpretation of the research work on educational philosophy of Śaṅkaradeva. Chapter six discuss about the educational contribution of Śaṅkaradeva. The last chapter gives a resume of research along with the salient findings, their social significance and educational implication and suggestions for future research.

The objectives of the study in this area is to ascertain the extent and depth of **“Śaṅkaradeva and His Educational Philosophy – A Study”**. For this purpose the whole socio-educational and religious conditions of 15th/16th century Assam have been taken into consideration. Naturally and importantly the order and methods of the great teacher Śaṅkaradeva is very cautiously studied and evaluated. An indirect attempt has been made to pick-up the context in the writings and activities of Śaṅkaradeva to establish a relationship of his philosophical thinking with the educational ideals and actions.

The sources of study are out of reach and rare as no detailed study has yet been done in this specific direction. The existing activities and matters relating to Śaṅkaradeva's literary and religious contributions are not enough to cover the areas of his educational and philosophical thoughts. The *Carita-puthis* (biographies) also differ in their opinions as because the *Caritkers* (biographers) were not the contemporaries of Śaṅkaradeva. On the other hand in the few *Śaṅkari* institutions the original writings on the sanchi leaves are preserved strictly. There are mostly not reachable for ordinary common learners.

The related studies of literatures have been taken as the bases upon which the researcher has developed the concepts for this humble purpose. The writings and activities of Śaṅkaradeva are the dependable guides to the goal. *Guru-Caritas* of different *Caritkars* (biographers), authoritative scholars like Satyendranath Sarma, Maheswar Neog, Banikanta Kakati, Birinchi Kumar Baruah on different publications of the works of Śaṅkaradeva and other books and publications on this line have immensely served the purpose to a great extent.

In the bibliography a list of Books, Journals that have been necessary directly or indirectly for the study has been given in the proper places with their contextual references. In the bibliography APA (American Psychological Association) method have been used.

Śaṅkaradeva being taken at the centre the study has been made strictly specific and limited within the radius of the study **Śaṅkaradeva and His Educational Philosophy – A Study**. This is a unique and considerable choice for the study and it paves the way to completion with satisfaction.

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